

For the Nights by moonflowers

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Summary:

Ever since Billy'd transferred to Hogwarts in third year, the two of them had been at each other's throats, taken any excuse to rile each other up. Though, in the spirit of full disclosure, Billy had definitely been the one who'd started it. Something about him had crawled up Billy's nose and he'd just never been able to drop it, which in turn ruffled Steve's feathers and made him snarl and snap at Billy. But he wasn't even sure there was genuine dislike underneath it anymore, just habit. Habit and an embarrassing need for King Steve's undivided attention. The one redeeming factor was that he knew Steve was just as into needling him as it was the other way around; he got the same little sharp grin when they got into it as Billy did. And now they were in seventh year, and he didn't know any different than pretending to hate Steve Harrington.

For the Nights

Author's Note:

Not exactly a Halloween fic, but the longer Hogwarts AU I've promising for flipping ages. Enjoy :)
Originally from the prompt: "If I tell you then it won't be a secret." Title from The Scorpions' No One Like You.

Billy had a problem. And unlike a lot of the other seventh years, it wasn't the growing amount of homework or exam prep the teachers were piling on them despite it only being October; he was a fucking excellent student. It wasn't his own bullshit either, for a change. He had a tendency, when he felt sad, or angry, to self-sabotage. Or, that was what the absolutely batshit Divination professor had always claimed, before he'd quit the subject. The feeling of never quite fitting in, always being one step behind everyone else, inadequate. Which wasn't even true – again, check out his damn grades – but being muggleborn, he'd missed out on a lot of the stuff other kids had grown up with, stuff they took for granted. Kids like Steve Harrington, pureblood and always so damn perfect, loved by just about everyone, who had everything that Billy didn't.

Ever since Billy'd transferred to Hogwarts in third year, the two of them had been at each other's throats, taken any excuse to rile each other up. Though, in the spirit of full disclosure, Billy had definitely been the one who'd started it. Something about him had crawled up Billy's nose and he'd just never been able to drop it, which in turn ruffled Steve's feathers and made him snarl and snap at Billy. But he wasn't even sure there was genuine dislike underneath it anymore, just habit. Habit and an embarrassing need for King Steve's undivided attention. The one redeeming factor was that he knew Steve was just as into needling him as it was the other way around; he got the same little sharp grin when they got into it as Billy did. And now they were in seventh year, and he didn't know any different than pretending to hate Steve Harrington.

And it was Steve that was the main cause of Billy's problem that evening. Or to be more precise, Billy thought as he watched Steve

check over his shoulder before slipping around a corner, yellow scarf snug around his neck, Steve was Billy's problem.

Much like Billy, Harrington was known to bend the rules every now and then. Main difference being, Steve seemed to get caught *more* often but end up in *less* trouble, yet another reason he pissed Billy off. But since the end of last year, after all that crap about the Byers kid, he'd been looking even shiftier than usual. He was absolutely terrible at being subtle. Something Billy shared honestly, albeit in a different way. Billy was all about being flashy, the loudest, the best, whereas Steve was just plain terrible at keeping his emotions off his face. Couldn't have been more obvious if he tried. And he'd looked especially shady that evening when Billy'd seen him tiptoeing up the stairs from the Hufflepuff common room.

Billy wandered about the school after lights out a lot, if he couldn't sleep. Sometimes it was to talk to Barb, the ghost of a Hufflepuff student who'd been killed in an unfortunate Care of Magical Creatures class a decade or so ago. She was sort of alright to talk to; she sat with him while he did homework sometimes, usually in the kitchens, because it was bad for his image to actually be *seen* doing homework. But that night, he'd been skulking about the school mostly just because he knew he could – his glamour charms were fucking top notch. So when he'd caught sight of King Steve sneaking around the castle, naturally he'd followed.

Embarrassingly, Billy was so focused on his own imaginings about what Harrington could be up to, he stopped paying so much attention to everything else. His cockiness got the better of him, and he dropped his guard enough for someone to grab hold of him and wrestle him into a cupboard, too taken by surprise to put up much of a fight. He was angry about being overpowered for all of two seconds, until he smelt broom wax and familiar cologne, and realised it was Steve who'd grabbed him. Well, that put it into a different context altogether, and he wasn't exactly opposed to being shoved around by King Steve just a little bit.

"Any reason in particular you dragged me into a cupboard and locked the door, Harrington?" Billy made a point of leaning casually back against a shelf, like it was something he did every day, despite the fact that he felt about ready to claw his way out of his own skin.

"We were about to get caught," Harrington hissed and turned to face him. Not that Billy could see much of his pretty face in the dark; the barest pale blue outline where moonlight came through the tiny sliver of a window, and hit the slope of his nose. "Which wouldn't have happened if you hadn't been following me, asshole."

"I don't know about that," Billy said, really warming to the subject now. Pulling Steve Harrington's pigtails was basically a hobby by this point. "You're always trippin' over yourself, sweetheart. I saw you dancing with Wheeler at Christmas, I'm surprised she's still got toes."

"Look, just cut the crap Hargrove," he kept tilting his head towards the door, like he was listening out for something on the other side. Cute. "Why were you following me?"

A good question. Honestly, Billy wanted to push his way into Harrington's life in any way he could, pull any sort of attention from him he could get. It'd been that way ever since his late transfer to Hogwarts. His muggle dad hadn't let him go to begin with, told Billy the letters were some kind of scam, until the ministry finally bothered to look into it and packed him off to Hogwarts. Maxine, of course, had been allowed to attend with absolutely no fuss a few years later when she turned eleven. But that sounded pathetic, so instead, he said, "looked like you were in an awful hurry. And I got to wondering, where could a pretty boy like you be going all alone in the middle of the night?"

"Well," Harrington said, voice pitched just as falsely silky as Billy's, low and teasing as he ducked in close, "if I tell you, then it wouldn't be a secret."

Crap. He was used to Steve being all up in his space; the amount of scraps they'd gotten into over the years, it would have been impossible not to. But it was normally in daylight, with Tommy egging Billy on and Wheeler attempting to call Steve off, outside a classroom or at breakfast or the quidditch pitch, and never alone in a storage cupboard in the dark with barely an inch between them. He'd gotten good at pretending he didn't want to kiss Steve. He'd had a lot of practice since sometime last year when he'd realised that he'd prefer to be kissing him than flinging curses at him. But that moment was the closest he'd come to giving in, with Steve's breath warm on

his cheek, him smelling of toothpaste and broomstick wax, the place on Billy's forearm that he'd grabbed a minute ago still feeling oddly heavy, even though he'd long let go. Steve was obviously still waiting for him to say something, eyebrow raised and looking unsure, and Billy chose to believe it was wishful thinking that his attention dropped for a second to Billy's mouth. So he did what he always did when he felt cornered, or scared, and pushed back.

"Nice try, Harrington. Where are you going?"

Steve bristled, drew himself up so that inch he had on Billy was really fucking noticeable, looked like he had something to say about it for a second. But then he deflated again just as quick, huffed and pushed his hair back from his face. "You're not going to let this go, are you?" Billy thought he almost looked pleased about it, but again, it may have been that depressing combination of bad lighting and wishful thinking.

"Nope."

"I wouldn't expect anything less, Hargrove."

"You know me so well, pretty boy."

"Yeah, unfortunately. Now come on," he grabbed a hold of Billy's forearm again to drag him back out of the cupboard, "you already made me super late. They're going to fucking kill me..."

Billy wanted to ask who, but he was so damn thrilled about that one point of contact, Steve's long fingers wrapped firm around his wrist that it sort of... fluttered out of his head before he could grasp it. He was so giddy over it. In fact, pleased and outraged at Steve manoeuvring him around corners, grip tightening if he heard a noise in the corridor, yanking him into the shadows again, that he didn't realise where exactly Steve was taking him until he let go, and Billy looked up to see the dark line of trees in front of them.

"The forest?" he said, scowling into the woods, "are you actually fucking insane, Harrington?"

"You wanted to come big guy," Steve said as he walked into the trees,

frowning like he was concentrating on remembering the way, Billy just an afterthought, “so be the big, bad, brave Gryffindor you always claim to be, and stop bitching about it.”

“Stop bitching?” Billy said loudly, annoyed, as he took off after him, “you’ve dragged me all the way - “

“Steve!” an enthusiastic shout drew Billy’s attention to the group of people standing about in a clearing in the trees, “what took you so long?”

Billy stopped short. This had to be a joke. The clearing was full of the losers Max hung out with; those four boys and one weird girl everyone said was a seer, Max herself looking just as outraged as Billy at his being there. Then there were Harrington’s buddies Wheeler and Byers, and... their Defence Against the Dark Arts professor. Which honestly just left Billy with more questions than ever.

“The hell is he doing here, Steve?” the Henderson kid spoke again, scowling at Billy like he was crup shit on the sole of his shoe.

“The hell are *you* doing here?” Billy threw back on childish reflex, feeling a bit of an idiot when Steve elbowed him in the ribs for it.

“Shut up, dumbass.”

“You told him?” Sinclair stepped up alongside Henderson, looking wounded.

“You know the rules, *Steve*,” Wheeler junior said, sounding far too happy that Steve had apparently broken some dumb rule of theirs.

“I’m sure he had a good reason,” Nancy Wheeler piped up, arms folded as she watched Steve carefully, Byers and his little brother standing quietly behind her.

He ignored all of them. Harrington was pinching the bridge of nose and looking like he’d really rather be back in bed and wouldn’t be much help at all, so he looked to his step-sister instead. “Maxine,” he said, “what is this?”

She looked ferocious for a moment, the fiery seven year old who'd said stubbornly that he wasn't her brother and never would be the very day Neil and Susan told them they were getting married. He'd always sort of admired her for that. But then she just looked tired, the same sort of tired Harrington always seemed to look. "We weren't allowed to tell you, Billy."

"What?"

"Hargrove," Steve started, finally checking in to the conversation long enough to notice that Billy might have needed a little explanation, face tight and apologetic, "I –"

"There'll be time to play catch up later, boys," Professor Hopper said gruffly, breaking the stony silence he'd held since Billy and Steve had arrived, and straightened up from where he'd been leaning against a tree, "right now we've got company."

It was like a switch had been flipped. The kids all snapped to attention, drawing their wands and taking a defensive stance. Billy laughed at them, their serious little faces and grips tight on their wands like there actually was something in shadows out to get them, and this wasn't all somehow a kind of elaborate and shitty prank. But then he followed the professor's line of sight between the trees, and abruptly choked on his own spit.

"The *fuck* is that?"

"That," Hopper said, stepping forward along with Steve and the Wheeler girl to form a defensive line in front of the kids, "is a whole lot of trouble. You guys stay back," he yelled over his shoulder to the kids, "unless absolutely necessary, do you hear?"

"Starting to wish you hadn't followed me?" Steve turned to say to Billy, grim smile on his pretty face, eyes bright in the moon through the trees.

Yes. "Course not," he said, attempting to grin sharply back, but his eyes snapped back to that thing skulking towards them through the trees, two, four, seven of them now, and drew his own wand. "Nowhere I'd rather be."

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"Maybe next time, you'll stay the hell outta my business, asshole," Steve said to him as they trudged up one of the side staircases. Billy's glamour charms might have been good, but he was feeling dazed and drained, and not stupid enough to risk waltzing up the main staircase, enchantment or not.

"Probably not," Billy said, loud enough that a sleeping dragon in a nearby portrait twitched and grumbled as they passed. "I'm not that easy to scare off, Harrington."

"Guess not." Billy'd been hoping Steve would have more to say about it than that, but he just frowned down at the carpet under their feet like he was figuring something out. He couldn't say he blamed him; he probably felt just as wiped as Billy did, after the night they'd had.

Which he understood. It hadn't been nice. He'd never seen anything like them before; not in *Care of Magical Creatures* – which okay, made sense because they were obviously fucking dangerous – not even in books, and he read a lot more than people gave him credit for. Sort of dog sized, grey-green and slimy looking, long finger-like claws and the odd clicking, chirping sounds they made at each other before they pounced. Worst of all was their faces, eyeless, like a venomous plant bud that opened with a screech to reveal rows upon rows of dreadful, spiked, drool-covered teeth. Fucking nasty. But the kids had barely blinked, like they'd seen it all before. They'd been scared, clearly, but they'd all held their ground, watched each other's backs. He was astounded they'd all come out of it relatively okay – the Hopper kid had a bitch of a nosebleed, and Henderson an ugly cut from where he'd tripped over a tree root, but that was all. Hopper had still ushered them all quietly up to the hospital wing to get them checked over anyway. Harrington was sporting a split lip, but once he'd assured Hopper he and Billy were fine apart from a little dirt, he'd let them go, and they'd made their way back through the castle.

Billy was just sort of following Harrington really, half lost in thought and still riding too much of a high, too many questions, for him to want to go back to bed. He hadn't thought to ask where they were headed until Steve whispered the password to the prefects' bathroom. Which made sense; it was quiet, hidden away, and gave them

somewhere to clean themselves up. Billy eyed himself briefly in one of the mirrors, paused for a moment when he saw just how out of sorts he looked, still wide-eyed and hair a mess, dirt on his cheek and a leaf stuck in his collar. He saw Harrington in the reflection, prodding at his busted lower lip and wincing.

“Let me get that,” Billy said before Harrington could refuse, reaching out to take a hold of his chin, muttering a charm to heal it up. And if he held on a moment longer than he needed to, so fucking what.

“Thanks,” Steve said quietly when he let go, staring at him like he’d just done something offensive. And Billy was deeply familiar with that look, he’d earned it enough times. “It started last year,” he looked away and carried on without Billy prompting him. “Those things started appearing in the woods. The kids found them first, actually. Dustin was keeping one as a pet under his bed,” he snorted at the memory, shook his head. “I only found out because I doubled back to pick up a text book and found the common room completely fucking destroyed. They got bigger, and more dangerous, and Hopper found out. Will Byers almost died. You probably heard something about that, most of the school did. They covered it up though. The ministry made us sign a whole load of crap to make sure we’d never tell.”

“I guess I see why you were trying so hard to shake me off.”

“Yeah.”

“Better luck next time,” Billy said, winked half-heartedly even though Steve wasn’t looking, and felt like an idiot. “How the fuck did you and the brats manage to keep it a secret so long?”

“Will’s mom is the school nurse,” Harrington said, running his tongue over his newly healed lip. “She keeps any uh, weird injuries off the hospital wing records. And El’s a seer. Pretty handy. She can see when they’re going to cause us some trouble. She knew there’d be a bunch of them too close to the castle for comfort tonight, so we arranged to meet up to take care of it. Not that we wanted the kids to come, but there’d be no stopping them. Actually,” he frowned, “El probably knew you’d be there too.”

“That so?”

“Mm. Kept *that* to herself though. Was probably why she didn’t look too bothered about you being there. Although to me she never seems like she’s bothered by anything much, so it’s kinda hard to tell...” he trailed off, shook his head. “Sorry. When things get a bit... I can’t stop talking.”

“Shit, Harrington.”

“Yeah.” He kept on watching Billy in the tarnished reflection of the bathroom mirror, looking nervous. Though fuck knows what he had to feel nervous about – the worst of it was behind them, surely.

“You okay there, pretty boy?” Billy was startled by how much he actually cared.

“Huh?”

“You’re just looking a little jumpy. Which I totally get, but... y’know.”

“Yeah. Yeah I’m just – just glad you know? About all of it.”

Billy snorted. “I’m sure as fuck not. Why are you so happy about it?”

Steve hesitated, jaw twitching like he was about to say something and stopped himself. “Because now I can do this.”

He tore his eyes away from reflection-Billy and turned to face him. And Billy had barely a moment to blink before Harrington was kissing him, hands cold and firm at the base of his neck, lip tingling with the lingering warmth of the healing charm. It took a lot to shock Billy into inaction, but Harrington had figured out a way. He stood there, body gone slack and still with surprise, Harrington’s eyes screwed tight shut as he kissed at Billy’s parted mouth. Then his eyes were open, soft-brown and big as he pulled himself back a little, hurt and concern creeping over his face at Billy’s lack of response. He lifted his fingers away. And Billy was fucking furious with himself for being the one to put that expression on Steve’s face. A noise of complaint fell from his throat, petulant and desperate and a little bit angry, before he surged forward to lock his hands around Steve’s

middle, fingers digging in just a touch too hard as he crushed their mouths back together. It wasn't that great; too much tooth, uncoordinated and messy as hell, but he needed Harrington to know he wanted him back. It was the most important fucking thing in the world.

"Shit," Steve whispered when they finally drew apart to breathe, foreheads still pressed together.

"I'm sorry I didn't, y'know, right away," Billy felt his face get uncharacteristically hot as he tried to explain himself. Only Harrington could make him fucking second guess himself like that. "I just – I couldn't let you think I didn't want – fuck."

Steve laughed, a soft little choke of a thing. "I've wanted to do that since... I don't know. But probably longer than I thought."

"Yeah?" Billy swallowed down his own pride with Harrington's admission. "Me too."

"Shit. Why didn't you?"

Billy laughed, rough and dry and without humour, felt himself breaking apart a little bit, and hoping Steve could hold him together. "Because I'm a pussy Harrington, when it comes to you."

"Oh."

"Why didn't you?" Billy said. "Do somethin' sooner, I mean?"

"The same, I guess," he said, fingers tightening a fraction where they played absently through the ends of Billy's hair. "And that I knew I couldn't tell you? About – those things. We had to keep it all a secret, or we'd be in such deep shit. I didn't think I'd be able to keep it a secret from you if we started – y'know. Not forever. But now you know, so." He shrugged.

"In that case, I am glad I followed you."

They stood there on the bathroom tiles for a long while, swapping sweet little kisses that Billy would have been disgusted with himself over if he wasn't so elated, if it wasn't Harrington. There was just

something about him that made Billy act differently; whether it be a brash and anger-driven competitiveness, or the sort of softness he'd never expected to let anyone see. It was embarrassing, how stupid he was over Steve Harrington. But fucked if he would change any of it. He'd stand on that cold bathroom floor forever if it meant he didn't have to let go. But when he had to break away mid-kiss to yawn, and with Steve so tired he was practically propped up against him, they both knew they had to call it a night. They broke apart to splash some water over their faces to take care of the worst of the dirt, wake themselves up a bit. But their fingers were loosely linked together again as the bathroom door sealed shut behind them.

"Oh!" Billy startled at the familiar voice, and looked up to see Barb blinking at them in surprise, moonlight from a high window going right through her, making her look more ghostly than ever. "Hello, Billy."

"Aw fuck," Billy said. "Hi Barb."

"I could hear somebody in there," she said, looking more gleeful by the second, "but I'd never have guessed it was *you*."

"Yeah," Billy said, for once very much *not* happy to see her, "well, we'd better get going. Out of bed after hours and all."

"Really?" Barb raised a silvery eyebrow, eyes on their linked fingers. "You've never cared about that sort of thing before," she said smugly.

"Well, what can I say," Billy drawled, "Harrington here must be a good influence." He looked across to see Steve already watching him, still kind of a mess, but happy, smile bitten back and head ducked sleepily. Billy gave his hand a squeeze light enough that Steve could ignore it if he chose to, before tugging him gently away from the bathroom.

"Fine," Barb called after them as they headed back along the corridor, "but you'd best give me all the details later, Billy Hargrove!"

Author's Note:

This is the exact same fucking plot as things I've written for them a hundred times before, but just in Hogwarts lol.